

LOUISIANA TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

USDA CONFERENCE ROOM

ALEXANDRIA, LOUISIANA

JULY 17, 2007

RECORD OF AGENDA ITEMS AND COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Steve Carmichael, NRCS State Resource Conservationist, opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m., and welcomed the meeting participants. (See attendance list attached.) Carmichael introduced the new Acting State Conservationist, Dot Harris, and new Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, Leslie Michael. Each member introduced themselves to the committee. Carmichael reviewed the agenda and commented on the highlights of items to be discussed.

Copies of the last committee meeting minutes were reviewed. The minutes were approved as recommended by the committee.

♦ STATE ACRES OF WILDLIFE ENHANCEMENT (SAFE) PROGRAM/ CREP II UPDATE

David Carnline, FSA Program Specialist, gave an update on CREP II. CREP II in Louisiana is proposed to fund a 28,000 acre Native Prairie Restoration Project in SW Louisiana.

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) is proposed for a project in the southern part of the state. The intention of the program is to look at threatened and endangered species, species that are declining, or species of economic importance. The project goal is 3,500 acres in Louisiana of restored grassland and shallow water habitats in the Gulf Coast Prairie region benefiting Mottled Duck, Northern Bobwhite, and other declining bird species. It would be paired with a similar SAFE project in Texas.

A second possible SAFE project for Louisiana was discussed, focusing on the Bayou Bartholomew area. This project would benefit threatened or endangered mussel species, fish, and other wildlife through improved water quality. It would be paired with a similar SAFE project in Arkansas.

The total acre allocated to the state of Louisiana under SAFE is 5,200 acres.

TAC recommendation:

- The consensus of the full TAC recommends to the State Conservationist that the Louisiana TAC go on record as being in support of both SAFE projects that have been proposed for Louisiana.

◆ **REVIEW OF 2008 AVERAGE COSTS LIST**

Bill Waits, NRCS State Economist, gave a review of the 2008 Average Costs List process. Waits discussed how NRCS arrived at the figures using the same basic methodology in developing individual components this year taking averages of a populated database of last year's collected receipts of individual component prices. The costs list will be available October 1, 2007, through the electronic Field Office Technical Guide.

◆ **PROGRAM PAYMENT SCHEDULE FOR FY 2008 AND
FY 07 PROGRAM UPDATE**

Leslie Michael, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, discussed the Program Payment Schedule for FY 2008. The Program Payment Schedule is the actual flat rate program payment for the individual practice component. The payment schedule is for EQIP, WHIP, and CSP Programs.

Michael gave a FY 2007 EQIP program update. The percentage of state allocation obligated funds for General EQIP is 99.1 percent and Ground and Surface Water is 99.6 percent.

◆ **LONGLEAF PINE INITIATIVE**

Tim Landreneau, NRCS Program Specialist, discussed the Louisiana longleaf pine initiative. The initiative is to restore longleaf pine native grass ecosystem on historically longleaf pine in Louisiana using EQIP, WHIP, and non-governmental funding provided by the Wild Turkey Foundation (WTF). Five hundred acres of land in Louisiana were enrolled under this initiative in FY 2007. It is proposed to continue this effort in FY 2008 with an enrollment goal of 1,000 acres if WTF can secure additional funding. The TAC expressed support for continuation of this effort. Gretta Boley, Forest Supervisor, Kisatchie National Forest, stated she would be interested in partnering in a project for a longleaf initiative.

◆ **USFS/NRCS/NASF/NACD MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

Gretta Boley, Kisatchie National Forest Supervisor for U.S. Forest Service, reported on a net meeting conference she attended on July 6, 2007, regarding developing a Memorandum of Understanding involving the U.S. Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Association of State Foresters and the National Association of Conservation Districts. The Memorandum of Understanding describes

how agencies can work together to reduce redundancy to deliver cooperative conservation in forestry and conservation programs. This is an opportunity to share information on delivery of forestry and conservation programs to the public. The action plan includes program coordination, technical coordination, and outreach and education.

◆ WORKING WETLANDS PROGRAM

Ron Harrell, Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation, reported on a proposed working wetlands program. Harrell stated that no program in the Farm Bill recognizes aquaculture as working lands. The crawfish industry has developed a proposal to be included in the ongoing Farm Bill debate to create an Aquaculture Agriculture Working Lands Water Birds Habitat Incentives Assistance Program. The program would recognize and reward crawfish and rice operations for providing water quality benefits, habitat and other environmental services.

After Katrina and Rita, an increase of 25 percent in migratory birds moved to aquaculture lands. There are 150,000 acres of Louisiana aquaculture lands, the largest amount of any state in the nation. The crawfish industry feels that EQIP could help address these concerns.

An EQIP Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for August 23, 2007, and this item will be discussed at that meeting.

TAC recommendation:

- The consensus of the full TAC recommends to support the crawfish industry and the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation on the proposed Aquaculture Agriculture Working Lands Water Birds Habitat Incentives Assistance Program.

◆ LOUISIANA NONPOINT SOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Jan Boydstun, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, reported on the Louisiana Nonpoint Source Management Plan. The Nonpoint Source Management Plan is the basis of securing funds and outlines status water quality in the state and strategies to address concerns.

Next Meeting Date – No specific meeting date was set. A date in September will be finalized. Members will be notified when the date is scheduled.

12: 15 p.m. – Meeting Adjourned


Chairman

Louisiana State Technical Advisory Committee


Date

LOUISIANA STATE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

USDA CONFERENCE ROOM

ALEXANDRIA, LOUISIANA

JULY 17, 2007

LIST OF ATTENDEES

Dorothy S. Harris, USDA-NRCS
Steve Carmichael, USDA-NRCS
Leslie Michael, USDA-NRCS
Tim Landreneau, USDA-NRCS
David Carnline, USDA-FSA
Bill Waits, USDA-NRCS
Ron Harrell, Farm Bureau
Steve Minvielle, LCFA
J.B. Hanks, LCFA
Gretta Boley, USDA-USFS
Cal Baker, USDA-USFS
Jan Boydstun, LDEQ
Mike Brasher, Gulf Coast Joint Venture
Donna Morgan, LSU AgCenter
Carrie Castile, LSU AgCenter
Andy Dolan, USFWS
Carroll Cordes, USGS
Jay Huner, LA Wildlife Federation
John Westra, LSU AgCenter